

Subchapter D. Standards for Allowable Methods of Euthanasia for Animals in the Custody of an Animal Shelter

§169.81. Purpose.

The purpose of these sections is to set standards for allowable methods of euthanasia for animals in the custody of an animal shelter, in accordance with the Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 821.

§169.82. Definition. The following term, when used in these rules, shall have the following meaning, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise: Animal shelter - A facility that collects, impounds, or keeps stray, homeless, abandoned, or unwanted animals.

§169.83. Allowable Methods of Euthanasia.

(a) Only sodium pentobarbital or commercially compressed carbon monoxide gas may be used to euthanize a dog or cat in the custody of an animal shelter.

(b) When sodium pentobarbital is used to euthanize an animal, the following requirements apply.

(1) Persons administering sodium pentobarbital must be thoroughly trained in the proper methods and techniques for euthanizing animals. A person has until the 120th day following the date of initial employment to complete this training.

(2) The routes of injections of sodium pentobarbital, listed in the order of preference, shall be:

(A) intravenous injection by hypodermic needle;

(B) intraperitoneal injection by hypodermic needle; or

(C) intracardiac injection by hypodermic needle.

(3) All injections must be administered using an undamaged sterilized hypodermic needle of a size suitable for the size and species of the animal.

(4) Injection shall be conducted in an area out of public view.

(5) The area used for injection shall have sufficient lighting to allow for visual accuracy during the injection process.

(6) Each animal shall be weighed to determine the correct dose of sodium pentobarbital.

(7) Animals given sodium pentobarbital by intraperitoneal injection must be given 3 to 4 times the intravenous dose.

(8) Animals given sodium pentobarbital by intraperitoneal injection shall be placed in a quiet area, separated from physical contact with other animals during the dying process.

(9) Intracardiac injection may not be used unless the animal is heavily sedated, unconscious, or anesthetized.

(10) Carcasses of animals euthanized by sodium pentobarbital must be stored and disposed of in a manner that minimizes the potential for scavenging by animals or humans.

(c) When commercially compressed carbon monoxide gas is used to euthanize an animal, the following requirements apply.

(1) It must be performed in a commercially manufactured carbon monoxide chamber or one designed and constructed, at a minimum, to equal the effectiveness of a commercially manufactured chamber.

(2) The chamber must be located outdoors or in a well ventilated room.

(3) The chamber must be airtight and equipped with the following:

(A) an exhaust fan for indoor chambers which is capable of evacuating all gas from the chamber prior to the chamber being opened and is connected by a gas-type duct to the outdoors;

(B) a gas flow regulator and flow meter for the canister;

(C) a gas concentration gauge;

(D) an accurate temperature gauge for monitoring the interior of the chamber;

(E) if located indoors, a carbon monoxide monitor on the exterior of the chamber that is connected to an audible alarm system, which will sound in the room containing the chamber;

(F) explosion-proof electrical equipment if equipment is exposed to carbon monoxide;

(G) a view-port with either internal lighting or external lighting sufficient to allow visual surveillance of all animals within the chamber; and

(H) if designed to euthanize more than one animal at a time, independent sections or cages to separate individual animals.

(4) The gas concentration process must achieve at least a 6.0% carbon monoxide gas concentration not to exceed 10% due to flammability and explosiveness throughout the chamber within 5 minutes after the introduction of carbon monoxide into the chamber is initiated.

(5) The ambient temperature inside the chamber should not exceed 85 degrees Fahrenheit (29.4 degrees Celsius) when it contains live animals.

(6) All equipment, as specified in paragraph (3)(A) – (H) of this subsection, must be in proper working order and used at all times during the operation of the chamber.

(7) Animals must not be removed from the chamber until at least 5 minutes after cessation of respiratory movement.

(8) The chamber must be thoroughly vented prior to removing any carcasses.

(9) The chamber must be thoroughly cleaned after the completion of each cycle. Chamber surfaces must be constructed and maintained so they are impervious to moisture and can be readily sanitized.

(10) Persons operating the chamber must be thoroughly trained in the proper methods and techniques for euthanizing animals. A person has until the 120th day following the date of initial employment to complete this training.

(11) Operation, maintenance, and safety instructions and guidelines must be displayed prominently in the area containing the chamber.

(12) Carbon monoxide should not be used to euthanize animals reasonably presumed to be less than 16 weeks of age or suffering from decreased respiratory function. Very young animals are resistant to the effects of carbon monoxide and the time required to achieve death in these animals may be significantly increased. In animals with decreased respiratory function, carbon monoxide levels rise slowly, making it more likely that these animals will experience elevated levels of stress. The use of noninhalant methods of euthanasia should be considered for such animals.

(13) Only compatible animals of the same species may be placed in the chamber simultaneously.

(14) No live animal may be placed in the chamber with a dead animal.

(d) All animals other than cats and dogs, including birds and reptiles, in the custody of an animal shelter shall be humanely euthanized only in accordance with the methods, recommendations and procedures set forth in the 2000 Report of the American Veterinary Medical Association Panel on Euthanasia applicable to each species of animal.

(e) When using any of the allowable methods of euthanasia, the animal must be monitored between the time euthanasia procedures have commenced and the time death occurs, and the animal's body must not be disposed of until death is confirmed by examination of the animal for cessation of vital signs.